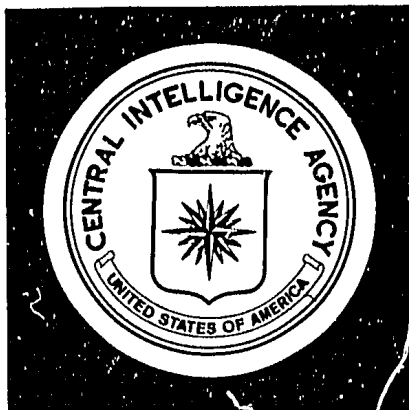


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OFFICE OF
NATIONAL ESTIMATES

O. N. E. MEMORANDUM

*Gierek's Poland: The Search for Prosperity
and National Identity*

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GIEREK'S POLAND: THE SEARCH FOR PROSPERITY AND NATIONAL IDENTITY

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

5 February 1973

GIEREK'S POLAND: THE SEARCH FOR PROSPERITY AND NATIONAL IDENTITY

Poland is the USSR's largest ally in the Communist world and in Europe; yet it has unusually strong historical ties with the West. With the USSR now embarked on an active and forward policy of detente in Europe, developments in Poland have taken on an added significance. To what extent are the Poles asserting their national interests under the rubric of detente? How far will the Russians permit them to go? Is communism in Poland evolving toward something new and different? Questions such as these can not yet be answered, but developments in Poland during the past two years permit them to be addressed in a new light.

Since the riots of December 1970 and the assumption of power by Edward Gierek, the material circumstances of most Poles have improved measurably; the internal political climate has become more open; and Warsaw has been conducting a more "active" foreign policy, though without challenging the Soviets. All of this represents steady if unspectacular progress for Poland and perhaps, in the long run, for Western interests in Europe as well. Gierek owes his success partly to a more tolerant Soviet attitude toward East European non-conformity, partly to his own prudence and resourcefulness, and partly to the new faces surrounding him. The Gierek team, in fact, represents a rather different kind of Communist leadership and one which could prove to be a model for other East European states.

This memorandum was prepared in the Office of National Estimates and discussed with appropriate offices in CIA, which are in agreement with its principal judgments.

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The Lesson of 1970

1. In a sense, Gierek passed his most difficult test two years ago. The winter of 1970-1971 was traumatic. Gomulka's 1970 reforms involving a controversial wage incentive plan and an untimely increase in food prices triggered riots in several Polish cities. Gierek's skillful handling of the situation -- his repeal of the Gomulka directives, his reassuring visits to the scenes of the disorders, and his winning of the USSR's benevolent neutrality -- steered the country away from what he describes (perhaps with some exaggeration) as the "brink of civil war." Poland did not suffer the fate of Hungary in 1956.

2. Yet Gierek may be under greater handicaps than was Hungary's Kadar 14 years ago. Poland's condition was not nearly so bad as Hungary's; Hungary had nowhere to go but up. Unlike Kadar, Gierek was not Moscow's hand-picked man, replacing someone the Soviets considered a traitor; nor were his country's economic resources in total disarray; nor, finally, were his people stunned and depressed by Soviet military intervention. For the longer term, as we observed in 1971, "Gierek may find his job tougher than Kadar's -- the Soviets more

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suspicious, his people more impatient, and his economy harder to operate on."*

More For the Consumer

3. Like most typical "socialist" states, Poland traditionally has emphasized production goals for industry, especially heavy industry, rather than those sectors of the economy of direct interest to the consumer. Yet because the crisis which toppled Gomulka reflected worker and consumer grievances, the new regime has found it necessary to promise the Polish people repeatedly that consumer needs will be greatly upgraded in Polish economic planning.

4. Though such promises are obviously self-serving (and are treated with skepticism by the average Pole), the tangible gains in real wages and employment made to date and scheduled for the near term are impressive and suggest that Gierek wishes to assign these goals much higher priority than Gomulka. Thus, in 1971, the regime programmed an 18 percent rise in real wages through 1975. Revised estimates presented to the Polish parliament (Sejm) in December 1972 indicate that this target will be equalled or exceeded by the end of 1973.

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This means that the increase during the first three years under Gierek will match that of the last 10 years under Gomulka. And whereas Gomulka did not stress full employment, the Gierek regime has, and to this end is seeking to create nearly a million new jobs by 1975. The report to the Sejm last month suggests that employment too is expanding at a faster rate than originally planned.

5. To satisfy expected increases in consumer demand, the regime has been employing a number of short-term measures. The price freeze on basic food items, established two years ago, has been extended through 1973, although Gierek told the Polish trade union congress last November that the regime could not afford to subsidize the freeze indefinitely. Food and other consumer goods have been imported in large quantities (with the help of a Soviet hard currency loan of about 100 million dollars). A liberalized tourist agreement of January 1972 between Poland and East Germany resulted in such a massive shopping spree by the Poles (more than 9 million visited East Germany last year) that the Gierek regime had to apply currency restrictions at the end of the year; but meanwhile a lot of Poles had obtained needed consumer items. And for the past two years the regime has permitted Polish firms producing consumer goods to resort to such costly means as overtime and extra shifts in order to increase the availability of their products.

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6. Gomulka's planners would have avoided such measures, on principle; even more of a departure are this regime's priorities over the longer term. For the dogmatists surrounding Gomulka, private automobiles represented unnecessary luxuries, housing construction was less worthwhile than other endeavors because it is "nonproductive," and the idea of prosperity of private farmers seemed immoral. The Gierek planners simply do not view matters the same way. By virtue of Warsaw's well-publicized agreement with Fiat, for example, Poland will begin to produce relatively inexpensive automobiles in 1973. Polish economists stress that it is not merely a question of satisfying the demand for automobiles but of creating a spinoff effect in other sectors of the economy.

7. Similarly, the regime's frontal attack on the housing problem is designed both to satisfy individual consumers and to repair a serious and long-neglected weakness in the infrastructure. Four out of every 10 habitable rooms in Polish urban areas were destroyed during World War II. Under Gomulka the housing problem in Poland remained acute. In 1970 only 140,000 apartments were constructed, and this represented a decline from the previous year. The housing shortage not only imposed enormous social costs on the population, but severely restricted the rational exploitation of the labor force and the geographic dispersal of investment.

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8. Gierek has promised that each Polish family will have its own suitable dwelling unit by 1990. [] Polish officials estimate that about 7 million new apartments or houses will have to be completed between 1971 and 1990 in order to meet this goal (there are only about 8 million units of various types in all of Poland now). The regime's efforts are reflected in the Sejm's projections for housing in 1973 -- about 225,000 new units. The regime has also stated it will encourage private investment in housing construction. But even in the best of circumstances, the Poles will not make much progress in easing the housing shortage before the 1980's.

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A Green Revolution?

9. Since the decollectivization phase of the 1950's, Polish agriculture has been about 85 percent private and by East European standards is quite productive. However in recent years Gomulka's planners tried to reduce the profit margin of the private farmer, and this misguided policy helped to create shortages of high quality foods. The measures adopted so far under Gierek seem intended to enhance the economic and social status of the private farmer and thereby his incentive to produce such foods. In so doing Gierek has virtually abandoned whatever commitment his predecessors had made to the eventual collectivization or "socialization" of the countryside.

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10. The first phase of the new agricultural policy was announced in April 1971 and implemented last January. The regime abolished the unpopular system of compulsory deliveries, increased state procurement prices, granted property titles to about a million private farmers, adopted tax laws to make easier the purchase of state lands, and extended free health care to private farmers and their families. The second phase went into effect on 11 January 1973 and involves a major realignment of the rural administrative structure. More than 4000 rural "communities" are now replaced by some 2000 "parishes," each one under a "parish chief."* In the process a large number of local officials, including Communist Party (PUWP) and Peasant Party officials, are to be retrained as agronomists, forcibly retired, or as a Politburo member has explained, simply sent "back to work at their farms."

11. What is basically involved here is the abolition of certain organizational vestiges of the collectivization era. Under the old system private farmers had to contend with a large number of poorly educated bureaucrats who had the power to meddle but not to help. The new system is designed to develop a corps of officials who have both the expertise to assist the farmers and the authority to adapt central directives to local conditions. Each parish is to become a kind of economic and political microregion, with the parish chief acting somewhat like the director of a large enterprise.

* *The term "parish chief" dates from the pre-Communist era.*

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12. So far the results of Gierek's agricultural policy have been favorable. Polish agriculture produced eight percent more in 1972 than in 1971, a rate of progress "not recorded in recent years," a regime spokesman told the Sejm last month. In particular, the overall output of meat supply in the first half of 1972 was more than 24 percent higher than in 1971; an expected rise in state purchases of pork should boost that figure much higher in the next year or so. Milk purchases and butter production were about 20 percent higher last year than in 1971. Moreover, without unduly disrupting domestic supplies of potatoes, Poland last year was able to export a large quantity to the USSR on an emergency basis. Self-sufficiency in each branch of agriculture does not seem an attainable goal (or, economically, a very useful one) in the near future. But if present trends continue, Poland should be able to reestablish its traditional position as a net food exporter even while better satisfying domestic demand.

Toward Economic Reform

13. The Gierek regime is moving cautiously in the direction of decentralizing economic decision-making and encouraging a greater role for material incentives and market mechanisms, but it has encountered several internal obstacles. Aside from the expected resistance of functionaries in the Party apparatus and government bureaucracy, there are some honest differences of opinion among Polish

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economists trying to blueprint the reforms. Not all of them agree, for example, on how to phase out inefficient firms without causing serious unemployment.

14. The tendency of the Polish reformers is to follow the Hungarian model, which is the most advanced in the Soviet camp, but still far short of a free market economy. A January 1973 reorganization of a few selected industrial enterprises, designed to give them greater latitude in determining investments and wages is a case in point. It is a cautious, limited experiment; even the word "reform" is proscribed in the decree. Of course all such discussion seems rather remote to the Polish consumer, who after all does not much care how an industry is organized, or whether the prices are fixed or free, so long as better products are available and he has the money to pay for them.

The Defense Burden

15. During the last five years of Gomulka's tenure, Polish defense expenditures rose steadily in absolute terms and as a percentage of the total budget and of GNP. And under Gierek they are still rising. In 1970 they represented just over nine percent of the total budget, while the announced budget for 1973 indicates

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they are almost 10 percent. The censored Polish press seldom refers to the defense burden, but the average Pole seems well aware of it.*

16. A body of reporting from diplomatic and clandestine channels indicates that Gomulka was vexed by the size of Polish defense expenditures but that Gierek is more determined to reduce it. Exactly how he proposes to do this is not yet clear. Meanwhile he reportedly has under consideration a program for using a number of active duty military officers in non-military assignments. His rationale is that such officers have the education and administrative efficiency to perform well in civilian leadership posts, and that the regime actually needs them in such positions. (Because there is no great surplus of Polish officers, perhaps even a shortage, such a reassignment program could not be adopted on a large scale unless accompanied by reductions in the number of enlisted men as well.)

17. There seems to be considerable resistance in the Polish high command to reductions in the Polish armed forces, and to the

* For example, a tape recording of Gierek's January 1971 meeting with the shipyard workers in Szczecin (which recently became available in the West) includes his quotation of lines from a so-called "Szczecin Ballad," among them: "He [Gomulka] kept bread from the Polish nation, but not tanks, because he got those from the East; [and so the Poles] called Gierek to the helm." Gierek dissociated himself from the statement but did not challenge its validity.

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whole notion of MBFR. Interestingly, this attitude is due, not to any fear that the Germans or others are about to attack Poland, but rather to a feeling that the nation has become a rather solid Number Two in the Warsaw Pact and ought not to risk any loss of that status. Some of Gierek's civilian advisers may be sympathetic to this line of argument. Gierek certainly pays attention to it. He recognizes that the high command as a group stood with him and against Gomulka in December 1970. The military voice in the leadership is therefore somewhat louder than it was two years ago, and the Defense Minister is now a full member of the Politburo.

18. The Soviets probably will settle this issue for the Poles in the course of MBFR negotiations. If Moscow favors eventual reductions in the "indigenous" forces, the Polish armed forces by their very size (more than 300,000) seem a prime candidate on the Warsaw Pact side. Certainly the Polish high command would not be able to resist pressure from both Gierek and Moscow for reductions.

Toward a Broader Political Base

19. In addition to improving the nation's economy, Gierek is also trying to narrow the gap between the ruling PUP and the rest of the population. For one thing, Gierek himself appears before one

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or another public gathering about once a week, and he has promised to continue this practice. His fellow Politburo members and other Party and government leaders follow his example. Although the Polish media report virtually nothing of the discussions themselves, Poles and the occasional Western observer concur that they are rather free-wheeling affairs, with audience questions touching on even the most sensitive subjects. Officials will frankly admit to these audiences that one or another measure is impossible because the Soviets would disapprove -- "We cannot permit another Czechoslovakia."

20. Moreover, the regime has been permitting non-Party groups a greater degree of autonomy. For example, workers are free to reject labor codes drafted by government officials and to take management to court for breaches of contract. That the courts often decide in favor of the workers is one of several indications that the judiciary is more independent than under Gomulka. The Writers' Union has been allowed to readmit members previously expelled for non-conformist views (e.g., sympathy for Czechoslovakia), and while authors are still subject to censorship, mildly provocative articles and

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letters to the editor are permitted (even encouraged sometimes) by the regime.*

21. Moreover the Catholic Church is harassed less often in Poland nowadays than in any other Communist country, including Yugoslavia. Indeed, the Gierek regime has written off large unpaid back taxes previously levied on church assets, eased the rate of taxation, and restored church titles to hundreds of sequestered buildings and lands. Last year the regime allowed religious leaders to invite Cardinal Krol, the Polish-born leader of the US hierarchy, to visit Poland (Gomulka had forbidden such an invitation), and Polish authorities helped airlift some 1,500 Polish Catholics to Rome for special religious ceremonies.

22. Thirdly, under the rubric of a new "cadre" policy, Gierek is limiting or at least modifying the influence of the PUWP apparat over the training and selection of leaders. Indeed

* A case in point is the Polish treatment of Russian author Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. In April 1972 the Soviet newspaper Trud carried a lengthy attack reprinted from a Polish newspaper on Solzhenitsyn's August 1914. In most East European countries, nowadays, that would have been the end of the matter. Not so in Gierek's Poland. A few weeks later another Polish newspaper published a long letter pointing out, among other things, that it was strange indeed for Poles to attack a book not published in Poland, and stranger still that no one in Poland had ever heard of this critic, one "Jarzy Romanowski" ("Romanowski" is in fact not only a Polish family name, but a slang expression for "Russian agent"). The letter-writer implied that the article had been composed in Russian and then badly translated into Polish.

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Gierek and his spokesmen continue to warn the PUWP, publicly and privately, that the rural reform is only a link in a chain of planned reforms in other areas of Polish society, including the PUWP apparatus. Training and skill, rather than Party loyalty, are to be the operative criteria in the regime's selection of "cadres." There are signs that Gierek favors the appointment of non-Party personnel to certain positions formerly held as a matter of course by Party members.*

23. Finally, Gierek has changed virtually the entire team at the top. Of the 20 men in the PUWP Politburo and Secretariat, 16 attained their present positions after Gomulka's departure in December 1970, and Gierek himself is the only full member of the Politburo to predate the Party changes of November 1968 (when Gomulka began to lose effective control of the Party). All but 2 of the 19 provincial-level Party secretaries have been replaced since December 1970, and about half the PUWP Central Committee. Further down the line, Party officials have already screened about two-thirds of the general membership (of over 2 million), and additional changes in PUWP membership are on the horizon.

* In July 1971 the editor-in-chief of the newspaper Polityka, Mieczyslaw Rakowski, argued that it was absurd to require that every factory director, schoolmaster, or bank manager be a PUWP member; in his view many "non-Party people" are "superior in intelligence and performance to many Party members."

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24. This infusion of new blood has resulted in much more than a simple change of entourages. The social profile of the Polish ruling elite has changed radically. In mid-1968, and even in mid-1970, the top 20 in Poland rather resembled their 26 plodding counterparts in Bulgaria, at least in terms of formal education and years of Communist Party membership. Since then the Bulgarian elite has grown longer in the tooth but otherwise retains the same basic characteristics: less than half have college degrees or equivalent; and all but four joined the Communist Party before the end of World War II. But now the educational background of the Polish elite is unequalled in any other Communist regime -- five Ph.D.s, eight others with master's degrees, the rest with diplomas from college or Party schools. Moreover, 14 of the 20 joined the Polish Communist Party only after World War II had ended. Only one (Wladislaw Kruczek, the unpopular trade union chief) was a member of the Polish Communist Party before World War II began. The postwar generation of Communists has come to the fore in Poland to a degree not matched elsewhere in Eastern Europe.

25. In estimating the likely behavior of Party leaders, age and education can of course be misleading. Gustav Husak, the Party First Secretary in Czechoslovakia, is much younger than Tito, and received far more formal education than Dubcek, yet in Western terms

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is far less "progressive" than either one. But the social and educational level of the leadership as a whole is quite a different matter. Measured against either their predecessors under Gomulka or their counterparts elsewhere in Eastern Europe, the Gierek men do indeed seem to be better qualified, more flexible, and more imaginative.

26. They are not professional revolutionaries, but trained administrators, searching for practical ways to improve the economic performances and living standards of their own industrial society. Probably because of their own impressive educational backgrounds, they seem especially eager to consult expert opinion, whether it is inside or outside the Communist Party or east or west of the Elbe. They prepare their domestic policies thoroughly, and for the most part carry them out consistently. Their approach to foreign policy problems is somewhat analogous to their accommodation before December 1970 to Gomulka's authority. That is, they accept present realities, but they are alert to any opportunity for favorable change for themselves and for Poland.

Foreign Policy Trends

27. Regime spokesmen frequently refer to the "activization" of Polish foreign policy under Gierek, and presumably this rhetoric is intended to signify Warsaw's efforts to display more initiative

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in foreign affairs than was customary under Gomulka. As a survey of the first two years of Gierek's foreign policy would reveal, the rhetoric is rather inflated. Credit for the treaty with Bonn must be given to Gomulka, not Gierek. Most Poles realize that President Nixon's visit to Warsaw, however satisfying to the regime and population, was a sideshow to the Moscow Summit and would not have occurred but for the US-Soviet meeting. Gierek's visit to France was basically only a ceremonial reciprocation for President de Gaulle's rather more significant tour of Poland in 1967. Moreover, Warsaw's energetic pursuit of trade and aid agreements with Western countries has been successful to the extent it has largely because of the excellent credit standing achieved in Gomulka's last five years in power.*

28. Gierek and his associates have shown no disposition to challenge the Soviets on any major foreign policy issue, including especially those issues concerning Europe. On the contrary, the Polish leaders were distinctly uneasy over Romania's insistence at the first round of CSCE preparatory talks that all participants be

* More than a third of Poland's foreign trade is with the USSR -- about the same percentage as its trade with all non-Germanist countries. The revised 1971-1975 plan calls for foreign trade to rise by 57 percent over the previous plan period. But imports are to rise faster than exports. For 1975 the regime plans a 13 percent rise in exports, compared to a 20 percent increase in imports.

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treated as sovereign states enjoying equal rights. Giersek showed his and the Soviets' displeasure by cancelling a scheduled meeting with Ceausescu. The Giersek regime fears, among other things, that Romania's behavior might cause Moscow to tighten, not loosen, its hold over the rest of Eastern Europe. The Poles believe that the Romanian proposition is unrealistic in any case; they accept their junior status vis-a-vis the USSR. As a Polish diplomat recently noted, "Poland has finally come to terms with history, geography and power."

29. Beyond this, there seems to be a strong feeling in Warsaw that Poland's alliance with the USSR need not be as confining as it once was. In the wake of the Presidential visits to Moscow and Warsaw last year, one prominent Polish commentator advanced the intriguing notion that the "role of the middle powers" (read: Poland) "increases proportionately to the progress of detente in East-West relations." Apparently some Poles are even ready to believe that the Russians will someday allow the "socialist commonwealth" to evolve gradually into a rather comfortable arrangement like the British Commonwealth. They argue that Warsaw's "pro-Russian course" is no longer incompatible with other international associations, including ties with Poland's "traditional friends in the West."

30. In the context of seeking ties with "traditional friends" the Giersek regime has begun to show particular interest in "Polonia,"

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i.e., the body of people permanently living abroad who are either native Poles or of direct Polish extraction. This does represent a departure from the pattern of postwar Polish foreign policy. Prior to Gierek's accession, Warsaw was generally hostile or indifferent to Polonia, and Polonia reciprocated in kind. Indeed from the mid-1960's onward relations with Polonia were under the general supervision of secret policeman Mieczyslaw Moczar, whose jackbooted jingoism offended his presumed audience and who, in any case, devoted most of his energies to factional struggles within the PZWP.

31. Gierek made his first direct approach to Polonia in September 1971 -- not long after Moczar's removal from power -- when he unexpectedly showed up at the Congress of Polish Technicians and appealed to the delegates from foreign countries "not merely as Party First Secretary, but as one who has lived abroad for 22 years and has something in common with emigres." What Gierek asked for then, and his subordinates have asked for since, is not just Polonia's goodwill but Polonia's "advice, friendly comments, and critical remarks" -- in other words, expertise. Polonia's scientists and engineers, if they are willing, should help Polish industry improve its products. Polonia's businessmen should help market these products. And Polonia's housewives and consumers should "buy Polish."

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32. As an ex-emigre Gierek may be overrating the importance of Polonia, or at least his ability to use it to Poland's advantage. Nevertheless, Polonia does represent a potentially rich and so far unexploited resource. While the regime's statistics may be questionable, it is clear that the Polish diaspora is quite large relative to the 33 million people presently in Poland.* Moreover, these Poles abroad are located in countries which are of considerable interest to Poland's exporters. Many of them are professional people and (according to the regime's figures) about 15,000 own businesses.

33. To gain Polonia's goodwill and cooperation, the regime is offering, broadly speaking, an ethnic point of reference. Poles abroad are now encouraged to visit, vacation, study, even retire in the "old country." Foreign authors of Polish ancestry are promised an opportunity to publish their works in Poland. Polonia's religious and political leaders are now welcome. Permitting Cardinal Krol's visit

* *The Polish journal Argumenty estimated that as of July 1972 Polonia comprised more than 10 million people; about 6.5 million in the United States, 1.4 million in the USSR, a million in Latin America, mainly Brazil, 750,000 in France, over 300,000 in Canada, and smaller numbers in Great Britain, West Germany, Australia, New Zealand, and Belgium. In January 1973, following the visit to the US of Deputy Premier Wincenty Krasko, Chairman of the Polonia Society, the Polish News Agency revised the figure for the US upward to "about 10 million." Argumenty's estimate for the USSR is apparently calculated on a different basis than that used in the 1970 Soviet census, which showed a much lower number of Poles.*

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was a major gesture to Polonia, not simply to the Church. This year the regime has invited Polish-American Congressmen to come as a group -- also an unprecedented step. Those who are sensitive to the political acoustics in Polonia (analysts in RFE's Polish Unit, for example) believe that substantial numbers of people will prove receptive to one or more of the regime's offers.

34. By inviting into their midst large numbers of Polish-speaking Westerners, however, the Polish leaders are risking what Soviet and East European (even some Polish) propagandists describe nowadays as "ideological subversion." For example, as long as Warsaw plans to invite Polonia's youth to spend long periods in Poland, it is fatuous for the PUWP Central Committee to promise, as it did last November, that it would "do everything possible to immunize the young generation against alien influences and alien aspirations." Continued jamming of RFE broadcasts seems inconsistent with the regime's appeal to all sections of Polonia, yet ending it would certainly raise Soviet suspicions. Publication of Western authors in Poland will make the country's intellectuals chafe all the more against existing censorship. And given the large American representation in Polonia, the regime may find itself less inclined than the Soviets to criticize US policies.

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Trouble Ahead?

35. By and large, the prospects for both Poland and the Polish regime for the next two or three years are favorable. Thanks to Gierek's economic policies, there is no domestic crisis on the horizon. Most Poles will continue to see their own standards of living improving, especially since Gierek and his planners are likely to remain attentive to consumer needs. Gierek's cautious approach to introducing economic reforms is not likely to create major economic difficulties. Politically, the Polish economic reformers who want Gierek to proceed at a faster rate do not represent a large or powerful constituency. Gierek can afford to tell them to wait awhile.

36. Conceivably Gierek could have difficulty over the next two or three years in controlling the pressures for political liberalization. For example, holding public meetings at which ordinary citizens question one or more leaders and otherwise let off steam is helpful now but may become troublesome later on. As one Polish letter-writer recently observed, leaders who have been in power a year or so tend to become "less eager" to hear criticism from below. Important questions from the audience have to be answered or, at a minimum, they will be raised again. There is always some articulate Pole who is willing to ask (as a Szczecin shipyard worker did in fact ask Gierek) why it was necessary for Poles to shed blood in order to change their leaders.

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37. Gierek is certainly not a democrat in the Western sense, but at least he wants to be seen to be trying to make the political system more responsive to public desires. In addition to what he and his colleagues have already done in this area, they are believed to have a number of other proposals in mind. These include, for example, the selection of PUWP officials by the rank-and-file membership instead of the PUWP apparat, the upgrading of the power of the Sejm at the expense of the PUWP, and the drafting of a new constitution which would provide for a more effective separation of powers. For the near term Gierek and his associates are unlikely to do more than talk about such ideas. Even the talk will be muted, lest the Russians hear too much of it.

38. Gierek knows that his relationship with Moscow will not be entirely smooth and harmonious, and the Poles have evidently adopted a strategy of moving cautiously. There are credible reports that the Soviets, especially through lower-level contacts and other East European parties, have been applying warnings against certain reforms. The major targets appear to have been agricultural and religious policies along with personnel changes. On the other hand, relations between Gierek and the top Soviet leaders appear to be very good, and he has taken pains to establish his loyalty to the USSR as well as his

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indispensability in Poland. He no doubt expects some difficulties to arise from time to time, and particularly if he carries out some reforms now only being talked of.

39. There is always a danger that one or more of Gierek's political opponents (the PUWP Secretary for Warsaw, Jozef Kepa, and certain ex-Interior Ministry officials come to mind in this connection) may feel so threatened by the changes in Poland that they will go tale-bearing to the Soviets. Assuming the Soviets themselves were inclined to suspect Gierek's orthodoxy anyway, the testimony of a disgruntled Polish official could be quite harmful. After all, exaggerations by certain Czech and Slovak officials helped to make a case against Dubcek in Moscow.

40. At the same time Gierek no doubt recognizes that the lesson of Czechoslovakia inhibits the Russians as well as the Poles. Part of the lesson is that the Russians -- though they can be provoked when they see a real threat to their vital interests -- prefer not to use force in Eastern Europe and that this preference in fact provides the East Europeans with considerable room for maneuver.

41. Gierek is unlikely to maneuver very far from Moscow's position on basic foreign policy issues. He expects that his support for Moscow will buy Soviet tolerance for those domestic innovations he

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considers essential. It will be a moderate price indeed so long as Soviet foreign policy continues to emphasize detente, because this is the policy the Gierek regime prefers anyway. To some extent, then, Gierek will try to use his influence to keep the USSR on a generally "detentist" course. Given his status as spokesman for the USSR's largest ally, his talents as an effective and articulate leader, and the confidence that comes to any leader after two rather successful years in power, Gierek's views on many questions, whether directly related to Polish interests or not, will increasingly be listened to, and perhaps even asked for, in Moscow.

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